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# Nazi “Chic”? German Politics and Women’s Fashions, 1915–1945

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During the Third Reich, various groups with varying agendas attempted to persuade German women that only German fashion could do justice to their unique, noble qualities. Exactly what the term “German fashion” meant, however, was never fully clarified. The groundwork for these conflicts in the Nazi fashion world was laid in the years surrounding the First World War. Then in the 1920s, when Berlin vied with Paris to become the cultural “hot spot” of Europe, aspects of modern chic were deemed degenerate and un-German by certain factions. The culmination of these fashion battles in Germany occurred during the Second World War.

Using fashion as a window into a number of important social,

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**Figure 1**  
 "Goose-stepping, vulgarly-dressed, plump German women." From the French World War I cartoon book, *Fashion in Germany: the League against Bad Anglo-French Taste*.

political, cultural, and economic issues, a study of German fashion illuminates the ambiguous relationship between German women and the Nazi Party, changes in female clothing and images, how German women experienced those changes, and the glaring contradictions between ideology, propaganda, official directives, and economic realities.

In 1914, the opening year of the Second World War, a cartoon book was published in Paris entitled *Fashion in Germany; the League against Bad Anglo-French Taste* (Radiguet and Arnac).<sup>1</sup> Filled with depictions of goose-stepping, vulgarly dressed, "saftige" German women accompanied by their pinch-lipped, monocled, medal-adorned men, this comic book was a humorous jab at the Germans' body build and lack of taste, as well as a declaration of French supremacy in all things fashionable. Style, according to the cartoonists, was innately French. Stocky German women only made fools of themselves attempting to replicate what came so naturally to the thin and elegant women of France. Chic would always be unattainable to plump German Gretchens.

Seemingly in retort, the German Dr. Norbert Stern wrote a two-volume study of fashion and culture in 1915. Promising a "philosophical objectivity," Dr. Stern nonetheless chided Parisian designers for their "insolent," "lascivious" fashions, which, he claimed, even many French women despised. In the chapter entitled "Los von Paris!" ("Get out of Paris!"), he further asserted that German women's decorum and morality had been perverted by the "hussiness" of French fashions, their natural beauty destroyed by layers of French cosmetics. Degeneration was imminent unless German women steered clear of all things emanating from France, the "land of coquettes" (Stern 1915, 2: 68–114).

This type of nationalistic propaganda made its way into German youth group debates concerning appropriate clothing in 1916 and 1917. The female section of the *Wandervogel* decided that their clothes should be "German," "healthy," "pretty," and "practical," unlike French fashions, which were as "changeable as a hydrometer" and always in search of the new (Grob 1985, 150–1, 171). Even into the 1920s, the *Geusenmädels*, a girl's youth group to the right of the political spectrum, rejected "foreign and un-German" modern fashion because its "foreign spirit disturbed" their "inner life" (Klönne 1990, 241–3).

In all of these discussions, nationalism was certainly a major issue, brought to the forefront by the onset of the First World War. In fact, a 1915 publication suggested that it was treasonous for German women to continue wearing French-inspired skirts and high heels while their brothers and fathers were paying for this betrayal with their blood on the western front (Sander). The same year, a catalog was published that illustrated clothing considered far more appropriate for German women to wear at work in the factories and at home during the years of the war (Sander and Wirminghaus-Köln).

Economics, however, also played a role. Although German fashion designers had always looked to Paris for inspiration, they had worked

hard in the years preceding the First World War to build up the domestic fashion industry in order to achieve a certain independence from Parisian influence. Successful in their endeavors, clothing, including designer outfits, coats, and ready-made blouses with exquisite finishing details, ranked among the chief exports of Germany before the First World War. Paris "chic" may have still set the tone in the 1920s, since German designers continued their seasonal trek to France once the war was over to view the salon shows and purchase reproduction rights to available couture prototypes. But, Berlin "*schick*"<sup>2</sup> transformed high French fashions into accessible, ready-to-wear clothing (Stamm 1989–90, 189). By the mid-1920s, the *Hausvogtei*platz in Berlin had become an international center of fashion, especially for *Konfektion* or ready-made women's apparel (Berliner Damenoberkleidungsindustrie 1962; Dahn 1968; Moritz 1971). Regardless, wealthy German women continued to eye the latest from Paris, and spent much of their money on French creations. They were encouraged in part by upscale German fashion magazines<sup>3</sup> that presented photo spreads of the newest styles from Paris and London next to the best offered by Berlin and Vienna.

Negative criticisms of the "new androgynous woman" of the 1920s abounded in all countries. The Germans, it seemed, excelled in their descriptive attacks. One article entitled "Fashion as Weapon" asserted that "The newest fashion . . . elevates the board-like flat chests of underdeveloped and tubercular [females] to the mark of dignified elegance . . . Oh, irony of life!" (Volckert-Lietz 1921, 20). In 1928, the German revue song "The Trend in Fashion" humorously put into words what many thought:

She stands in the window to be seen by all,  
a skinny woman, unmoving.  
Cloth for her costume was apparently lacking—  
for what she shows on top is woeful.  
She cannot boast—she has no bust,  
The bodice is cover for the whole body.  
She has no hips—she has no lust,  
this leftover of a woman! . . .  
Who is this exclamation point of need? . . .  
Is it Starvation personified?  
Or just the newest trend in fashion?<sup>4</sup>

Alongside such general critiques, articles appeared in German newspapers criticizing English designs and deriding the "masculinized . . . odious fashions . . . which have been transplanted here [in Germany] from America" (*Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* March 29, 1925). It was, however, the French who were causing the German clothing industry its greatest headaches and, therefore, were receiving its harshest indictments.

After the First World War, leading designers and manufacturers of German clothing established the *Reichsverband der deutschen Moden-Industrie*. In its journal *Styl*, the group's goals were delineated: strengthening the German fashion industry and achieving independence from foreign influences (Freudenberg 1922).

In 1923, the *Verband* called for a total boycott of all French fashion items in response to the French occupation of the Ruhr. The *Verband* declared, "We would have found it abominable if fashion representatives had traveled to Paris and made purchases there at a moment when our countrymen in the Ruhr Valley . . . are being harassed and mistreated to the point of bloodshed. It was not for us to turn our eyes from the fact that the French are doing absolutely everything conceivable to ruin us." No longer a question of business sense, of "the interests of the industry," rejection of French fashion in 1923 was "self-defense against such humiliation. Those who have no feeling for this . . . betray their national and personal honor for the sake of material interest" (*Styl* February 1923, 52–3).

These rhetorical fashion battles continued throughout the 1920s, and peaked in the 1930s and 1940s when Hitler's National Socialist state unsuccessfully attempted to persuade German women to adopt a uniquely German fashion. In part, the problem was that the term "German fashion" was never defined. Did it mean any clothing produced only in Germany by "Aryans" with German materials? This definition would not have proffered a particular kind of fashion, but would have promoted the Nazi Party's ideology and policies of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and autarky—economic self-sufficiency and nonreliance on imports (Kerschbaumer 1978, 322–38; Petzina 1968; Plumpe 1990; Stephenson 1983, 117–42). Or, did "German fashion" imply something more concrete, a real trend in fashion; for example, the resurrection of the dirndl dress (*Das Reich* 1941), shunned to a certain extent in the metropolis of Berlin, but still popular in rural regions, in Vienna, in Hitler's adopted home of Munich, and for particular Nazi celebrations. Perhaps, traditional regional German costume, *Trachtenkleidung*, could serve not only as visual expression for the rediscovered connection between women and the German soil (Historisches Museum Frankfurt 1981, 88–9; Jacobeit 1989, 145–51; Petrascheck-Heim 1966), but also as Germany's contribution to the international fashion scene (*Signal* 1940).

Variations on the dirndl dress became popular under the rubric of "the Bavarian Style," and were spotlighted in the later 1930s in English, French, and American fashion magazines. Robert Piguet, Mainbocher, and other French couture designers presented dirndl-inspired creations as part of their spring 1939 collections (Wachtel 1969, 60–1). But, by the autumn of 1939—while the world watched to see what Hitler would do next—the dirndl was rejected by the English edition of *Harper's Bazaar*: "We loved the dirndl well, but not too wisely, for it was essentially a peasant fashion" (Lynam 1972, 107).

Publicly, Hitler appeared enamored with *Trachtenkleidung* and the official image of women as nondrinking, nonsmoking, racially-correct “mothers of the nation”—homemakers and farmers’ wives who did not indulge in cosmetics and whose most important function was child-bearing (*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*—*Children, Kitchen, Church*) (Bridenthal et al. 1984; Koonz 1987; Noakes and Pridham 1975, 363–9). Hitler’s personal preference, however, was for slim, lipsticked, well-dressed women (Hoffman 1955, 141–2; Picker 1965, 34, 208; Stephenson 1975, 191).<sup>5</sup> It was widely known in Party circles that he especially liked the American dancer Myriam Verne, the Tiller Girls, and Marlene Dietrich (Deicke-Mönninghoff 1983, 38), who smoked and wore pants! In conference with Party leaders, Hitler asserted that “clothing should not now suddenly return to the Stone Age,” and although his statement was greeted with applause, the direction the *Führer* wanted clothing to take remained unanswered (Kotze and Krausnick 1966, 164).

In part because Hitler refused to take a public stance on women’s fashion, the Nazi Party never adopted a coherent program regarding this issue. Thus, sources from the Ministries of Propaganda and the Economy reveal ambivalent posturing, competing factions, and conflicting laws in what was once perceived to be the “monolithic” National Socialist state. Moreover, a reading of Nazi and non-Nazi German women’s journals visually establishes the popularity of international fashion throughout the Nazi years as well as dispels the prevalent stereotype of the German woman as either a Brunhilde in uniform or a chubby farmer’s wife.<sup>6</sup> Not only was fashion, including garments and textiles, one of Germany’s largest industries until the late 1930s, but German women, especially in large cities such as Berlin and Hamburg, ranked among the most elegantly dressed in Europe during the inter-war period (Armani 1995; Hessel 1984, 37).

How the few with money and power maintained this elegance through the war years, how the majority experienced the increased standardization of clothing characteristic of the Nazi period, and how women dealt with these transformations, once policies and the exigencies of war led to severe clothing restrictions, are questions my research attempts to answer. At the same time, this article redresses the tendency of fashion historians to focus exclusively on Paris.

Investigations into the fashion world uncover early conflicts within the Nazi Party between those members who proposed a return to the “true German” look, complete with dirndl dresses or uniforms, braids or *Gretchenfrisur*, and scrubbed faces, and other members who continued throughout the Nazi years to embrace certain facets of modernism. The more moderate and, at times, promodernist group included numerous German fashion designers, artists, and writers who reveled in the lively cultural scenes of Berlin and Paris, and incorporated these influences into their lives and work. Revues, cabarets, the latest dance craze, popular music, movie stars, jazz, *Neue Sachlichkeit*, big city nightlife—designers drew from all of these trends to express in clothing

the spirit of the time. The antimodernist faction, which described these “international fads” as “spiritual cocaine” (*Das Schwarze Korps* August 4, 1938; Westphal 1986, 10), produced countless posters, paintings, and laws to proselytize its reactionary and nationalistic stance.

Already in the 1920s, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi Party’s journalistic mouthpiece, carried numerous articles decrying the overwhelming and decadent French influence on women’s fashions. For example, an article entitled “German Clothing for the German Woman!” by a Frau Schünemann claimed that French fashions were unhealthy for German women, both morally and physically (July 9, 1927). To further persuade German women to change their patterns of consumption, economics were intertwined with moral and physical arguments. If German women selfishly continued to buy French products, German businesses would lose money, German workers would lose jobs, and the German national economy would, thus, be adversely affected. Notices printed in large type appeared beside these articles, reminding housewives to buy only in German shops. Furthermore, for the ideal German woman, devoted to her family and farm, beauty stemmed not from French cosmetics or trendy fashions but from an inner happiness derived from her devotion to her children, her husband, her home, and her country.

An essay in a 1932 Nazi women’s anthology, “Regarding Fashion and Related Matters” (Kropff 1932, 441–6), declared, “Our national pride alone should make us resist the imitation of foreign fashions—besides, what is fashionable for a small, brunette French woman absolutely does not fit a blonde, blue-eyed German.”

Another group besides the French were also targeted for criticism and, even worse, eventual ostracism from the fashion world; namely, Jews in the design, *Konfektion* (ready-made), and textile industries. Numbers were manipulated to justify claims that Jews dominated the German clothing industry and, therefore, were ruining economic opportunities for the “Aryan” middle class. Because of their “crushing presence,” Jews also had the power to contaminate fashions and, thereby, German women.

According to one author, the German woman was becoming immoral because of the “impudence in today’s fashions,” provably initiated by “Jewish racketeers.” These clothes, a “satanic mockery of womanhood,” were devastating to the German woman, who “now undresses to go dancing and dresses only when she lies in her bed.” The same author also maintained that Jewish department stores, “that usurp the small stores and therefore also national well-being and independence,” offer “the stylized costume of the city whore, a specifically Jewish invention . . . an insolent plague for the country in its tastelessness.” The “totally nude back is an open invitation for whipping, a ribbon somehow holds the whole disrupted thing together, the uncovered neck reaches far, really very far, the tight skirt ends way above the knee in a slit.” In this way,

German women were “unlearning the joy of human beauty with too many visible crooked legs and flat feet in lopsided high heels and stockings that only last two days.” Woman’s once noble image was descending into the depths of depravity, and the Jews were at the helm of this conspiracy. It was asserted, “Powers are at work to destroy human, feminine dignity. They are sworn to annihilate the Aryan race which is straightforwardly, chastely conscious of its human dignity” (Salburg 1927).

Other critics argued that Jews not only ruled the German fashion market, but that they owned the majority of the world’s clothing factories (Riecken 1935, 6–7). Although their numbers never amounted to the 80–90% “Jewish takeover” cited by agitators, Jews owned several large department stores and controlled approximately 49% of clothing design and manufacturing in Berlin (Wittkowski 1928; Berliner Damenober Kleidungsindustrie 1962),<sup>7</sup> the fashion capital of Germany. Their success made them easy targets for resentment in the inflammatory Depression climate of the early 1930s.

These anti-Semitic and nationalistic messages of the interwar period were repeated on countless occasions, so that by the time the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, the argument was clear. Only German clothing, specifically “Aryan”-designed and manufactured, was good enough for “the noble German woman.” Racially appropriate German clothing depended upon the elimination of Jewish and French influences from the garment industry (Sammelroth 1993).

An early 1933 article summarized this view:

We know . . . that the Parisian whores set the tone for the fashions offered to German women, yes, that . . . Jewish *Konfektion* dealers and designers concoct ‘high’ fashion in cahoots with the spinning and weaving industries, and with the help of the whore world that parades their wares . . . Shame and disgrace, degradation and debasement of German taste, of German self-reliance . . . Should this nightmare never end? . . . Now under the signs of the swastika, the *Wendekreuz*, the sun wheel . . . It is time that the German brotherhood within the new all-encompassing state begins to stir in the hearts of fashion-conscious German shoppers. Or else the all-embracing state will have to resort to force in the realm of taste as well (Engelbrecht 1933, 129–31).

Essays such as “How do I Dress Myself as German, Tastefully, and Appropriately” and “Everyday Economic Obligations of the German Woman in Buying and Consuming” appeared in the National Socialist Women’s Yearbook of 1934 (Gerlach 1934, 230–5; Vorwerck 1934, 89–97). The first article warned of the foreign destructive influences in fashion, particularly French and Jewish. This poison had been allowed for too long to wreak physical and emotional havoc on German women,



and thereby had contributed to national and racial deterioration. The author went on to condemn the prevalence of artificiality in fashion. Hair should not be dyed, eyes should not be covered by cosmetics, clothing should not appear provocative. Jewish-owned fashion magazines that touted such un-German and unnatural ideas should be ignored. Clothing should no longer dishonor women, but should now be created wholesomely and nationalistically. Fashion would thereby be socially and ethically exemplary, economically, artistically, and technically faultless. The German woman could then be proud to reclaim her membership in the Nordic race. The second essay concerned itself with female modes of consumption, and exhorted German women to buy responsibly and to place self-interest after national consciousness; in other words, to buy only German products.

One journalist, Agnes Gerlach, expressed concern that the degenerate influence of French fashion on German women had a negative physical effect, especially on a healthy rate of population growth. She offered no evidence for this conclusion (Gerlach 1933). Another author railed against women's use of makeup, rouge, hair-dyeing, and eyebrow plucking. Generally, if a woman was leading a fulfilling life, she didn't need these vices and should not submit to such foreign, decadent, unhealthy, and unnecessary influences. Specifically, it was un-German to use cosmetics (*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 1933).

Officially supporting the image of "Aryan" beauty as strong, healthy, natural, tanned, and feminine, the Nazi Party condemned cosmetics, alcohol, and cigarettes for women. It was suggested that sun and good health could and should take the place of rouge. Already in August of 1933, the *Kreisleitung* of the NSDAP in Breslau ordered that made-up women could not attend future Party meetings (Grube and Richter 1982, 110). Signs posted in numerous public places stated, "The German Woman Does Not Smoke." Party officials issued warnings aimed at women who indulged in cigarettes and alcohol (Bleuel 1972, 104; *Nachrichtendienst* 1939, 263), and antismoking films were produced for public viewing (Taylor 1983, 427). The issue of male smoking, however, was not addressed.

The *Schutzstaffel* (SS) newspaper, *Das Schwarze Korps*, used similar themes in its announcement that the SS would "vigorously expose . . . and unmask this front of international fashion fools." Furthermore, "non-Aryan clothes, which emphasized the individual style of the wearer rather than the uniformity supported by the SS, were 'unhealthy' and 'alien to the Germanic race'" (September 29, 1938).<sup>8</sup> Upholding this view, women in the SS *Lebensborn* were not permitted to use lipstick, paint their nails, or pluck their eyebrows (Stephenson 1975, 191). Emphasis was on fitness and health. The glow on women's faces was to come from sports rather than from rouge or lipstick (Jeckeln 1937).

The uniform of the *Bund deutscher Mädel* (BDM), the League of

German Girls, consisted of a white short-sleeved blouse that was closed at the neck with a black tie, a navy blue skirt, the length of which was exactly prescribed, short white socks, and brown leather shoes. No embellishments, no individual touches, nothing was allowed that might take away from the symbolic significance of the uniform—*Einheitlichkeit* and *Gleichheit*, uniformity and conformity. When not in uniform, BDM girls were to wear clothing that portrayed “simplicity, clarity, naturalness; a practical and yet beautiful style” (Grube and Richter 1982, 111–12; Klaus 1983, 51–4). Supporting this dictate, the *Berliner Tageblatt* of January 8, 1936 declared that members of the *Bund deutscher Mädel* should renounce all cosmetics. They were to wear only simple clothes, no jewelry when in uniform, and their hair in neat German braids. Thereby “individual coquettishness” would be impossible and the “German girl could become wholly hardened.”

Propaganda Chief Goebbels denounced frequently in public the decadent French and degenerate Jewish influences on German women’s behavior, clothing, and appearance, and insisted that fashion should be an expression of “our national life” (Taylor 1983, 249). Meanwhile, his wife, Magda Goebbels, in her capacity as honorary president of the unofficial *Deutsche Modeamt* (later *Modeinstitut*) founded in 1933, attempted “to make the German woman more beautiful” by clarifying the type of clothing the Nazi Party considered desirable and patriotic (*Vossische Zeitung* 1933b). The *Modeamt*’s chief objectives were to strengthen the German fashion industry by promoting “Aryan” designers independent of Parisian influence, to reestablish close ties between the design, handiwork, and textile industries—and, most importantly, to convince German women to buy only German garments. Clothing produced by members of the organization would be clearly labeled as “German Fashion” (*Vossische Zeitung*, 1933a; 1933c).

Numerous fashion shows, open to the public, promoted the “new German fashion,” and fashion schools throughout Germany were told to restructure their design curricula in order to train a new generation in the nuances of “German fashion.”<sup>10</sup> Even the fashion world’s vocabulary was revamped. Words such as *Konfektion*, as well as names of textiles and colors with foreign, i.e. French, roots were labeled “un-German,” disallowed, and replaced with “Germanic” designations (Buxbaum 1987, 184; Pennenkamp 1941; Westphal 1986, 120).

All of these discourses, however, were rife with hypocrisy. The French defeat in June 1940 sent the German fashion world into a panic. German fashion illustrator Gerd Hartung recalled that suddenly no one in Berlin knew what to do without the autumn Paris couture shows as inspiration for future German clothing collections. Accordingly, the designers’ new motto was “Alles ist Hut!” (“the hat is everything!”) (Hartung 1995). Furthermore, only months after the fall of France, a glut of silk stockings appeared in Germany. German soldiers stationed in the West also brought back French cosmetics, although these items were forbidden.<sup>11</sup>

And remarkably, in December 1942, more than two years into the occupation of France, a full-page ad for *Parfums Nôtre Dame* appeared in the German magazine, *Der Silberspiegel*.

Although the “slow but sure” downfall of the Paris fashion world was analyzed at length in a 1940 article in *Der deutsche Volkswirt* (Evers 1940, 378–80), Nazi officials, visiting or on duty in Paris, frequented the better fashion salons for purchases for their wives or mistresses. Their wives, including Frau Magda Goebbels and Frau Emmy Göring, continued to buy from their favorite Jewish designers in Germany until official “Aryanization” in the late 1930s made it impossible. Frau Goebbels rued the forced closings and “Aryan” takeovers because “elegance will now disappear from Berlin along with the Jews” (Meissner 1981, 200). Frau Goebbels, however, quickly learned to “make do,” outfitting herself in “Aryan” couture ensembles and finishing her look with cosmetics. Other women were not allowed such freedoms. For instance, already in 1934, a leader in the *NS-Frauenschaft* (National Socialist Women’s Organization) was forbidden to wear the uniform of Party officials for three years because she had mentioned that she was purchasing from Jewish firms (Genschel 1966, 87n).

Dr. Goebbels also assumed contradictory stances. Gleeful that the “Jewish nightmare” had been eradicated from all facets of German fashion, he nonetheless felt that the fashion industry needed a major overhaul. Goebbels bemoaned the less than elegant clothing on display, and scolded the industry for “plugging” dress designs that required excessive amounts of expensive material while Germany was in the middle of a war (Taylor 1983, 258). Rather, tailored styles that used less cloth should be pushed.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, Dr. Goebbels, who had a huge wardrobe (Trevor-Roper 1978, xxi), insisted on the best for himself as did *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring. The Propaganda Chief wore cream-colored silk shirts under his Nazi jacket, rather than the prescribed “brown shirts.” Göring, who was well known for dressing extravagantly, wore a white suit with an elegant bow tie and white hat to anything he dubbed “a festive occasion” (Jancsy and Sultano 1993, 62). His wife, Emmy, wore jewels and furs conspicuously throughout the years of rationing and war (Lochner 1948, 478).

Privately, Goebbels often referred to women as “bitches,” “wenches,” and “pains in the neck,” and thought them “unpolitical” and “lazy,”<sup>13</sup> especially upper-class women who wrangled their way out of any state-required labor service (Steinert 1977, 63–4). Even so, Goebbels defended well-dressed ladies who were insulted on the streets for not living up to the requirements of total war. Such criticism was “arrant nonsense,” he argued. “We must not make total war unpopular by such excesses.” Goebbels insisted that total war did not “involve a conscious and planned cult of the primitive” (Lochner 1948, 296). Moreover, fearing that he might lose women’s support for the war effort, Goebbels refused

to close beauty salons as late as March 1943, in spite of his strong advocacy of total war mobilization. "Perhaps one must not be too strict about them," he declared (Lochner 1948, 295). "Women, after all, constitute a tremendous power and as soon as you dare to touch their beauty parlors they are your enemies" (Lochner 1948, 367). Although permanents were eventually forbidden, a haircut or manicure could still be had for those who could afford such luxuries (National Archives, February 10, 1943: T-81, reel 3; Beck 1986, 40).

One faction of the Nazi Party, Goebbels included, attempted to convince the Vichy government to hand over France's top fashion designers, so that the "shamelessly eroticized," "whore-led" Parisian fashion industry could be reworked according to the Nazi standards befitting "dignified German womanhood" (Wulf 1983, 286). Clearly, it was hoped that Berlin would replace Paris as fashion mecca of the new Thousand Year Reich. Another faction, including German Major Schmidtke stationed in Paris, whom Goebbels described as a "complete nincompoop" (Taylor 1983, 313), wanted to protect the Parisian fashion industry and suggested that it should be left alone; Goebbels refused, stating "We must take a leading role in this field and not be troubled by inferiority complexes" (138).

Lucien Lelong, head of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*, was notified by Nazi officials that the French couture industry was going to be moved to Berlin and Vienna, so that it could be merged with the German fashion industry. Lelong argued that French haute couture was not a "transportable" industry. It could not create on alien soil, and could not survive if it were moved and possibly split up between those two major German cities. Because the couture world did not simply consist of the leading fashion houses, but also of the hundreds of suppliers tied into the fashion world—like the manufacturers of buttons, ribbons, and accessories—it would be virtually impossible to move the French fashion industry to Germany intact. The Nazis relented, perhaps because logic prevailed or, more likely, because the 1941 invasion of Russia was given precedence over the *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) of the European fashion world. The Germans did, however, greatly reduce the number of couture houses and restrict textile manufacturing, as well as ration the amount of material allowed in designers' collections.

Haute couture remained in France and, under sometimes miserable conditions, shortages, and obstructions, managed to present new collections twice a year. French couture houses also continued to sell to German customers. Lucien Lelong argued that it was the lesser of two evils to deal with the German occupiers than to starve the French fashion industry. To some, though, it reeked of collaboration with the enemy (de Marly 1986, 195–9; Lynam 1992, 40–3, 127, 138–40; Train 1991, 87–102; Veillon 1990).

Other contradictions existed as well. Despite women being warned against smoking by the Nazis, they were featured in numerous cigarette

advertisements—such as *Nil* and *Manoli-Privat*—and were often photographed or illustrated in fashion magazines and pattern books with cigarette in hand (*Die Dame*, *Der Silberspiegel*, *Die Mode*, *Berliner Hausfrau*, and *Beyers Mode für Alle*; see also “Mode und Haushalt,” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, December 22, 1940). The *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAF) offered cosmetics classes and published pamphlets, such as “Be Beautiful and Well-Groomed,” that gave advice on hair-dyeing and makeup. Moreover, Nazi Party higher-up and DAF leader Robert Ley officiated at the opening ceremonies of a Berlin beauty spa (Bleuel 1972, 98). Because most women did not have time to pursue sports and cultivate glowing tans, especially once the war began, tanning cremes were widely advertised and purchased. Due to the increasing unavailability of hose, brown leg cosmetics were produced and used as a substitute. Additionally, those women who did not fit the blue-eyed, fair-haired “Aryan” ideal were encouraged through advertisements and Nazi Party suggestions to dye their hair blonde. The “natural look” espoused in Party ideology simply could not be attained by the majority of German women without some manufactured help, to which the numerous advertisements in women’s magazines attest.

Various fashion schools, such as the one founded in 1930 in Munich headed by Gertrud Kornhas-Brandt, continued to teach an international style with emphasis on French designs, despite tongue-lashings from some party officials. The Frankfurt fashion school, led by Margarethe Klimt-Klenau, did the same (Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt a. M.). Ignoring harangues published in *Das Schwarze Korps*, non-Nazi women’s magazines such as *Die Dame* and *Die Mode* featured the latest trends until March 1943, when paper shortages and Goebbels’ “Total War” measures forced them to cease publication. Even the upscale Nazi magazine, *Frauenkultur im Deutschen Frauenwerk*, published pictures and advertisements for fashionable clothing that were completely at odds with the natural, scrubbed image propagated by other, more strident Nazi magazines such as Goebbels’ *Der Angriff*.

The party’s long-standing view that women who wore pants would lose their femininity, one of the most important sources of national strength (see *Die Mode*, March 1942, p.2, for example), was quietly shelved once the war began. As more and more women were prodded into industry, factory, and public service work, pants or overalls became not only a choice, but a necessity. And, farmers’ wives, who seemed the most likely and willing candidates to adopt the dirndl idea proposed by the conservative Nazi faction, were “trading bacon for dress goods, eggs for jewellery, butter for silk stockings” (Andreas-Friedrich 1947, at August 30, 1943). An author in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* asserted already in 1937 what became overwhelmingly apparent for the remaining years of the Third Reich—there was no “German” style (“Keine eigene ‘Deutsche Mode’,” April 23, 1937).

“Aryanization” had an enormous negative impact on the textile,

**Figures 2, 3, 4**

There was no "German" style.

**IMAGE AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY**

**Figure 2**

"100% Vamp," cover of *Die Koralle*, November 29, 1936.

clothing, and magazine industries. Economic issues were at stake; in particular, the elimination of Jewish competition through their expulsion from these industries. The Nazi policy of autarky, national economic self-sufficiency, launched with the "Four Year Plan" in 1936, also had a detrimental effect on the German fashion world.

The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutsch/arischer Bekleidungs Fabrikanten* (ADEFA), established in May 1933, directed the "Aryanization" of the fashion industry.<sup>14</sup> A sister organization, the ADEBE, was founded in January of 1938 to lend assistance to the "Aryanization" of the weaving, clothing, and leather sectors (Genschel 1966, 149). Through a combination of massive pressure, boycotts, sanctions, and the systematic persecution and emigration of countless Jews, the ADEFA succeeded by

**Figure 3**

Dirndl style or  
*Trachtenkleidung*, cover of *Die  
 Koralle*, October 4, 1936.

**IMAGE AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY**

1939 in making all areas of clothing manufacture “judenrein”: free of Jews (Jung 1938, 82–5; *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft* 1938, 305). The famous design houses, which had been instrumental in garnering international acclaim for Berlin’s fashion industry, were either forcibly liquidated or bought by non-Jews and renamed.

“Aryanization” had a devastating effect on the German economy. Fashion exports dropped drastically, as did domestic sales. The fashion world, now void of its creative mainstays, suffered from the effects of breaking up what had been a tightly-knit business community (Westphal 1986, 106–16).

The fashion industry also suffered from the Nazi policy of autarky,

which deemphasized Berlin's world-renowned designs and exquisite handwork. Instead, autarkic policies emphasized centralization, mass production, and the increased manufacture and use of synthetic textiles in order to promote non-reliance on imported materials (Kerschbaumer 1978; Petzina 1968; Plumpe 1990). Furthermore, the later policy of war reoriented the economy from consumer goods to war production.

Berlin's leading fashion houses were centralized into the *Berliner Modellgesellschaft* in the summer of 1941, and were instructed—with some exceptions made—to produce fashions only for export as a way for Germany to get much-needed foreign currency (Hartung 1995). Although the designs were beautiful, sales were far less than hoped for. Once the war broadened, countries that had previously imported German fashion goods erected stiff trade barriers. Only Nazi-controlled countries showed much interest in the *Modellgesellschaft's* creations, but few of those under occupation could afford them. The German fashion industry, which had at one time employed thousands of people, lost its eminence in the international fashion scene.

The *Reichsfrauenführung* (National Women's Bureau), led by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, organized a new section, the *Volkswirtschaft/Hauswirtschaft* (Vw/Hw), to promote the economic and ideological program of autarky to the thirty million women of the Third Reich.<sup>15</sup> The Vw/Hw educated women through classes, exhibitions, posters, and brochures on such topics as cooking with substitutes, mending and needlework techniques, shoemaking and shoe repairing using wooden and straw soles, coping with severe rationing quotas, sewing with the new synthetic fabrics, and making one new garment out of several old ones ("Aus zwei mach eins" was the catch phrase). One of the most popular classes instructed women on how to follow the new clothing patterns—clearly no easy feat since, in an effort to save paper, up to five dress designs were now reproduced on a single sheet. Publications included "Mend Well—Darn Well" and "Cook Well—Budget Well." Films such as the 1937 "Scrap Material—Raw Material" demonstrated effective methods of collecting and recycling old clothing, while the 1941 film "Dressing Well Outside the Home" provided tips on how to stay fashionable despite severe shoe and clothing shortages due to wartime circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

Magazines ranging from the upscale *Die Dame* to the Nazi women's journal, *NS-Frauenwarte*, newspapers, and special brochures published by Party organizations, such as the series *Zusatzpunkte für Jedermann* (Points for Everyone) (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsche Textilstoffe 1944), devoted much space to tips on reworking old clothes. For example, instructions were given on remaking a worn-out man's suit into a woman's jacket, transforming a tablecloth into a lovely skirt, crocheting a sweater out of string, or piecing together a "trendy" new outfit from two out-of-date dresses. Just because their country was at war did not excuse German women from trying to look their best. In fact, "Nothing



**IMAGE AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY**

would be more erroneous than the conclusion that the German people should now [in 1943] suddenly clothe themselves drably in gray and in sackcloth and ashes" (Bauer 1943, 87).

The Jews, however, did not benefit from this deluge of helpful hints. They had long been abandoned and so received no tips on how to cope, no help, no options. Reduced to noncitizens, their clothing coupons and ration cards had been eliminated already on November 14, 1939 since, as Robert Ley, leader of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, suggested, "a lesser race requires [. . .] fewer clothes [. . .] than a superior one" (1940; Beck 1986, 12–13). Their stores had been liquidated or "Aryanized,"<sup>17</sup> and they were not allowed to purchase from "Aryans." It was announced on September 1, 1941, that Jews in the German Reich above the age of six were now required to add a piece of cloth to their worn and dwindling supply of clothing—a yellow star designating them Jews (Noakes and Pridham 1975, 487–8). The ordinance took effect only eighteen days later (Jacobeit 1991, 240–1). Already in April, Goebbels had ordered the Jews in Berlin to wear the "distinctive" badge. "Otherwise," he commented, "they are constantly mixing with our people, pretending to be human and making trouble" (Taylor 1983, 328). Although much fanfare accompanied the Nazi Party's clothing collection drives in 1941, the confiscation of the Jews' winter clothes and furs was carried out in silence. Their possessions had to be handed in with all labels revealing maker and owner removed (Charman 1989, 94). During the winter of 1939, deportations of Jews from the Reich to Poland began. Mass deportations began in October 1941 (Noakes and Pridman 1975, 486–91).

In the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück, the 30,000 to 50,000 inmates went for weeks and months without washing and without sanitary napkins, combs, or changes of clothing. Only one pair of striped overalls or long shirt was provided, which was to last for three months; feet were shod in wooden clogs. And, by 1943, socks and underwear were no longer furnished to the inmates (Ravensbrücker Häftlinge 1946).

The hardships "Aryan" women faced cannot be compared to the severities suffered by Jews and other "enemies" of the Third Reich. Yet, the war also dramatically changed the lives of the majority of German women. Faced with severe cutbacks in civilian clothing, and barraged by propaganda directives chiding them "to make new from old," they had no money or time for fashion. In fact, they had little to look forward to as the prolonged war, a policy of total mobilization, and Nazi Party politics continued to transform their images.

On August 28, 1939, four days before the onset of the Second World War, certain foods, textiles, and shoes could be "purchased" only with government-issued coupons. On November 14, 1939, coupons were distributed that could be redeemed for shoes, coats, and work clothes. Rationing took full effect with the first *Reichskleiderkarte*, also issued

**Figure 4**

A dream out of tulle and voile designed by the Frankfurt fashion school. Hundreds of these party dresses were made for the leaders of the *Bund deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls) to wear to a special Nazi party event in 1938. The fashion school also designed the blouses for the BDM uniform. From the private collection of Volker-Joachim and Luise Stern, Bremen, Germany.

**IMAGE AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY**

in November, which was based on a point system.<sup>18</sup> Altogether four *Reichskleiderkarten* were distributed during the course of the war, but supplies did not suffice to cover even the first ration card. Beginning in August of 1942, coupons for textiles were only distributed to "bombing" victims (Deicke-Mönninghoff 1983, 38). Because of panic buying and hoarding (Beck 1986; Boberach 1965), and because the production of textiles was increasingly geared towards the needs of the army, stores were soon emptied of their reserves.

The *Sicherheitsdienst*, the security service of the SS, made weekly reports on civilian morale. Beginning with the introduction of the *Reichskleiderkarte* in 1939, it noted complaints regarding the complicated ration system and insufficient clothing supplies.<sup>19</sup> Complaints became so frequent by 1941, the *Sicherheitsdienst* determined that the clothing and shoe situation was undermining domestic morale. Goebbels also conceded "great problems with clothing." The situation was "so bad," he wrote, that it was "impossible to buy the amounts specified on the ration card" (Taylor 1983, 376–7). Shortages would become far more severe in the following year. In stark contrast, the January 1941 issue of *Die Mode* presented lovely silk, lace, and satin undergarments accompanied by the pronouncement that "beautiful lingerie is the expression of an elevated culture."

Sanitary napkins had been classified as "kriegswichtig," essential, by the Nazis (Junker and Stille 1990, 351). Nonetheless, production came to a halt in 1942 because of raw material shortages. The magazine *Mode und Wäsche*, however, offered a remedy for this monthly dilemma (1942/43, 1:11). Instructions in verse accompanied by a diagram educated readers on how to make a worn-out pair of men's long johns into two sanitary napkins, one bra, two dust cloths or one larger dish cloth, one washcloth, and two reinforcements for worn-out stocking toes and heels. If the reader followed these instructions, enough material would still be left for a piece of cloth, perfect for polishing silver! The poem ended with the reminder that not only would women be helping themselves by being so economical and practical, but they would be assisting the Fatherland as well (Jacobeit 1991, 243; Junker and Stille 1990, 329).

In April of 1942, radio announcements requested that women's used bridal veils be donated to the German nation so they could be used as mosquito nets for the *Afrika Korps*. By Christmas of the same year, shops in Nuremberg could offer nothing for purchase; only nude mannequins remained in the windows (Beck 1986, 19). Used clothing was being sold, the price of which was not to exceed 75% of the price for a comparable new item (National Archives, T-81, reel 7, December 22, 1942). But, because of further cuts in existing rations, used clothing prices far exceeded these stipulations. Even so, numerous notices in women's journals—from the upscale to the local Nazi publication—cajoled readers to save their used winter clothes for Germany's army on the Russian front and their other old clothing and remnants for Germany's needy.

#### Figure 5

Elegant suit designed by Hilda Romatzki, one of the leading fashion houses in Berlin, as part of the *Berliner Mode Modellgesellschaft*'s collection for export in 1943. From *Die Mode*, January–February, 1943.

**IMAGE AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY**

Shortages of shoes became critical; according to Goebbels, “catastrophic” (Taylor 1983, 296, 377). The *Sicherheitsdienst* reported that in Lambach near Wels, women lined up before dawn hoping to make a purchase, but in Wels alone there was only one-tenth of the 25,000 requested shoes actually available (National Archives, T-81, reel 7, January 25, 1943). With no new shoes on the horizon, women replaced leather shoe tops with straw or leftover material scraps and old soles with wood or cork.

At the same time, upbeat fashion articles tried to convince readers that the “new, noisier shoes” were “stylish” and “lovely” (*Das Reich*, June 2, 1940), “similar to the first flowers on a meadow” (*Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, July 9, 1941). Magazines like *Die Dame* and *die neue linie* featured sporty fashions for the summer of 1942 and elegant winter wear for the cold months ahead. Goebbels began a campaign for “greater politeness in public life,” with prizes offered to the most polite Germans (Lochner 1948, 166). And, photo spreads on the society pages pictured elegantly dressed officials’ wives enjoying an evening at the symphony. The contrast between fantasy and reality, between having and not having, became harder for many women to stomach.<sup>20</sup>

In 1943, increased armament production caused grave domestic shortages of consumer goods. On the heels of Germany’s shattering defeat at Stalingrad, during which thousands of German soldiers died, restrictions in mourning dress coupons were announced, just when they were needed most (Zittel 1972, 49). Cutbacks in civilian clothing were so severe that not even 1% of total demand for certain products could be met.<sup>21</sup> Sharp emphasis, therefore, was placed on repairing existing items, and women were exhorted to “make new from old,” as if they weren’t already doing so. Women spent hours darning stacks of disintegrating stockings and dilapidated undergarments.<sup>22</sup> Some women unraveled grain sacks or curtain cords, and used the threads to knit themselves a new pair of socks or underwear (Junker and Stille 1990, 337). Scraps of material were hoarded until there were enough to ingeniously piece together a blouse or skirt. Fallen parachutes were prized possessions because they could be reworked into underclothing or used for lining threadbare jackets.<sup>23</sup>

With no new clothes available, more and more attention was placed on hats, the popularity of which began with the 1940 declaration of German fashion designers, “Alles ist Hut!” By 1943, however, the motto had changed from “the hat is everything” to “old dress—new hat” (“altes Kleid—neuer Hut”). For many women, hats seemed to salvage the bad clothing situation in several ways. As an author noted, a new hat “perks up” the wearer, “lends charm” to an old dress, and, most importantly, it “saves valuable ration points” on the *Kleiderkarte* (*Das Reich*, June 2, 1940). Women used whatever they could find—strips of material, old scarves, worn-out napkins, ribbon, straw, wood shavings, and even newspaper—to create fashionable hats. Turbans were espec-

#### Figure 6

Because leather was so scarce, women resoled their shoes with wood, cork, or rope. The Frankfurt fashion school made heels out of plexiglass. Plexiglass remnants from airplane parts were also creatively reworked by the school into buttons and bridal crowns. From the private collection of Volker-Joachim and Luise Stern, Bremen, Germany.

ially popular because they required only a small amount of cloth. Moreover, they came in handy to cover unkempt hair and to keep dirt out at work. For evening wear, turbans were accessorized with bows, ribbons, lace remnants, flowers, or feathers.<sup>24</sup> An author in *Die schöne Frau* praised the turban not only for its known attributes (fashionable, practical, and cheap), but also expounded on a previously unacknowledged virtue of the turban—its health benefits. She wrote, “We get more air and sun on our scalps . . . and our hair and hair roots will thank us for this increased ventilation” (August 1940, 246). With no end to the war in sight, healthy hair roots were probably the least of women’s concerns.

As bombing attacks became more numerous, and the production of civilian goods was completely suspended for the war effort (Lochner 1948, 488) consumer shortages became desperate. Even so, another massive clothing collection campaign was planned, as if there was still much to collect, while Party officials continued in their self-indulgent lifestyles. *Sicherheitsdienst* reports overflowed with the complaints of hundreds of women, many of whom began openly criticizing and disobeying Party regulations. Long simmering resentment, due in part to suspicions that Party functionaries and their wives were exempt from restrictions brought on by total war mobilization, erupted with greater frequency (National Archives; Boberach 1965).

At one point, rumors circulated that women who owned more than three dresses would have their surplus confiscated. One woman reportedly threatened that if the authorities took away what she had saved and mended over the years, she would “spit on” the whole lot of them (National Archives, T-81, reel 6, March 29, 1943). The *Sicherheitsdienst* noted that as news spread that the Leipzig *Bund deutscher Mädel* had received thousands of yards of material for new dance costumes while German mothers were having to make do with only five diapers a month (Wagenführ 1963, 174, table 5) and hand-knitted sanitary napkins, personal outrage turned to public demonstration (Jacobeit 1991, 242).

In February 1945, as the “Thousand Year Reich” tottered to its defeat, the German journal *Signal*, which was distributed throughout Europe, published an article on German women’s ingenuity as they coped with war on the home front. Entitled “They don’t dream of capitulating,” the article praised women for still managing to be “smartly dressed,” “pretty,” and “attractive.” “Among more or less ruined surroundings, they fight their daily battle to preserve their own individual feminine world . . . They fight against difficulties and shortages with their lively imaginations, their adaptability, and their love of the beautiful.” The accompanying photos showed a purse made of rug wool, reinforced with cardboard, and a leather belt as strap; knitted slippers with fringe made of wool remnants; a belt made of horse reins; a hat made of colored felt scraps; a blouse made of an old tapestry; and a skirt made from six different pieces of wool and dyed black, once all the fabric remains had

been sewn together. Of course, the models were smiling. It is difficult to discern if the article was intended as a placating nod to German women in order to quell their complaints, anger, and fears, or if it was designed to convince the rest of Europe that females on the German home front were peaceful and happy. They were not.

A final irony regarding clothing took place only days before Germany capitulated to the Allies and the Third Reich collapsed. While Berlin lay in rubble and the Russians were practically outside the city gates, the high fashion salon of Annemarie Heise received a last-minute order for an elegant dress from Eva Braun, Hitler's beloved. Because large parts of the city were in flames, the finished order could not be delivered to the Führer's bunker, and so a courier was sent to fetch the outfit (Deicke-Mönninghoff, 1983, 40). Neither a dirndl *Trachtenkleid*, nor a uniform or dress bought with ration coupons, Eva Braun wore haute couture for her marriage—and suicide—vows to Hitler.

Although the National Socialist state violently forced Jews out of the fashion industry and forbade, with some exceptions, French fashion exports during the occupation of France, it made few inroads in persuading German women to adopt a uniquely German fashion. Fault lay with conflicting definitions of the term "German fashion." Sometimes, it was presented as a tangible trend in fashion, in particular, variations on the traditional dirndl theme. Other times, "German fashion" was presented not as outward appearance, but as a means by which the policies of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and economic self-reliance could be fulfilled.

Fault also lay with inconsistent policy directives and capricious enforcement as well as with contradictory and provocative Party officials' behavior. Clothing, which the Nazis had hoped to use as a tool in the consolidation of a national German spirit and community, a *Volksgemeinschaft*, instead drove a wedge between the Party and the majority of German women.

Ultimately, it was the Nazi policies of autarky and "Aryanization" and, later on, the cutbacks and sacrifices required by total war that dictated what German women could—or could not—wear. These factors, far more than the polemics and propaganda of the 1920s and 1930s, changed German women's clothing and, therefore, also transformed their images.

## Notes

1. All translations in this essay are the author's, with thanks to the family. Special thanks to Dr. Valerie Steele for her suggestions. Inconsistencies in capitalization of German terms and titles reflect those in the publications themselves.
2. "Schick" in German is equivalent to the French word "chic."



3. Right-wing agitators insisted that these magazines were overwhelmingly run by Jews: true Germans would not publish “perverted international fashion” to the detriment of the German woman (see, for instance, Wulf 1983, especially 225–57).
4. Abridged first verse of “Die Linie der Mode” from the revue *Es liegt in der Luft* (Schiffer and Spoliansky 1928). The revue’s theme song, “Es liegt in der Luft eine Sachlichkeit” (There’s Objectivity in the Air), made its way into the top ten hits of 1928 (see Guenther 1995).
5. Eva Braun’s fashionable clothing, bought mainly from the eminent couturiers Hilda Romatzki and, later on, Annemarie Heise, and her use of Elizabeth Arden cosmetics also supports this view.
6. Research has included full-run studies of *Die Mode*, *Die Dame*, *Elegante Welt*, *Der Silberspiegel*, *Frauenkultur im Deutschen Frauenwerk*, *die neue linie*, *Die Koralle*, *NS-Frauenwarte*, and *Die schöne Frau*. Other magazines and newspapers, of which only single issues remain, have also been included in my research.
7. For a thorough general examination of the role of Jews in the German economy and their eventual forced economic displacement, which also includes the areas of textiles and fashion, see Genschel (1966).
8. For other examples, see also issues dated August 21, 23, and 28, 1935 as well as August 4, 1938.
9. Archive “Deutsche Modeamt,” official letters, fashion show announcements, etc., Stadtmuseum Berlin, Landesmuseum für Kultur und Geschichte Berlins.
10. For Munich, see Ley (1981). For Frankfurt am Main, see archives of the Institut für Stadtgeschichte, especially Akten 6680/1, 6680/2, 6680/3, and 6680/4; for personnel, 6680/5.
11. Interviews conducted in Germany with women and men who lived through the Second World War, June–August, 1995. According to Dr. Peter Guenther, although laws were not specifically passed, soldiers were strongly discouraged from purchasing or “pocketing” French items.
12. French women’s insistence on wearing clothing that used an excessive amount of material during the German occupation has been interpreted by some historians as a form of “psychological resistance,” as were the actions of French couturiers who designed styles that were labor intensive or required large amounts of fabric. This has not been the case with interpretations of German women’s fashion, of which there are very few. In fact, the issue has only come up within the context of German youth group fashions (the “swing groups,” etc.).
13. Negative statements can be found throughout Goebbels’ diaries. English versions of these diaries have been cited above.
14. The ADEFA appears to have been established as a suborganization of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Bekleidungsindustrie* (directed for a while

by Herbert Tengelmann), itself a subgroup of the *Reichsverband der deutschen Bekleidungsindustrie* (under Otto Jung), which was a subcategory of the *Reichswirtschaftsministerium's* Group 6 "Leather, Textiles, and Clothing" (under Gottfried Dierig). All three of these men were fervent Nazis and intent on "Aryanizing" the German fashion and textile worlds. See *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon* (Berlin, 1935) and *Wer leitet? Die Männer der Wirtschaft unter einschlägigen Verwaltung* (Berlin, 1942) for biographies.

15. For a sample of Scholtz-Klink's political leanings as well as pictures of women supporting the war effort, see her *Frauen helfen siegen* (Berlin, 1941).
16. Information on the Vw/Hw has been derived from the Hoover Institute's NSDAP Hauptarchiv microfilms, Reel 13, folder 253.
17. Noakes and Pridham (1975, 479) for the "Decree eliminating Jews from German economic life," November 12, 1938. This decree formalized the "Aryanization" of Jewish property that had already been taking place on an "unofficial" basis.
18. Boberach (1965, 13–15). Various dates are given for the introduction of the first *Reichskleiderkarte*, ranging from November 1, 1939, (Jacobeit 1991, 239) to November 12 (Shirer 1988, 248), November 14 (Gruber and Richter 1982), November 20 (Boelcke 1967, 23). See also Kitchen (1995, 79).
19. Comments by and information on the *Sicherheitsdienst* reports have been derived from the microfilmed NSDAP records in the National Archives, particularly T-81, reels 6 and 7, or from Boberach (1965). For analysis of German public opinion during the war, see Beck (1986); Steinert (1977).
20. *Sicherheitsdienst* reports are filled with resentful remarks made by working women in regard to the upper class. Goebbels, too, frequently noted this in his diaries. See also Boberach (1965).
21. For an examination of German industry and production during the war years, see Eichholtz (1985), especially beginning with volume 2, 1941–1943.
22. Interviews with German women conducted in Germany, June–August, 1995. See also Wendel (1957).
23. Interviews conducted in Germany, June–August, 1995.
24. Interviews conducted in Germany, June–August, 1995. Illustrations and photographs of hats and turbans are numerous in newspapers and magazines of the time.

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